

**Application Narrative Supplement
999 Rio Road East Rezoning**

November 18, 2019

Basic Overview

Tax Map Parcel	Owner	Acreage	Zoning	Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designation
06100-00-00-154B0	Windmill Ventures LLC	1.91	R-4	Urban Density Residential

On behalf of Blackbird of Charlottesville, LLC, the contract purchaser of property designated on the County of Albemarle, Virginia (the “County”) tax maps as parcel 06100-00-00-154B0 and having an address of 999 Rio Road East (the “Property”), we propose to rezone the Property from Residential R-4 to a Neighborhood Model District (NMD). The Property contains approximately 2 acres. We propose designating the acre fronting Rio Road East for mixed-use, with the rear acre designated solely for residential (the “Project”).

Project Timeline

First Submittal	February 19, 2019
Resubmittal	April 29, 2019
Planning Commission Public Hearing	June 25, 2019
Recommendation of Approval by vote of 4-1	
Board of Supervisors Public Hearing	September 18, 2019
Deferral and recommendation to revise Application and appear before the Planning Commission a second time with revised Application.	

*various meetings with neighbors took place during the timeframe above, including with the Shephard’s Ridge HOA, residents of the four homes directly behind the Property along Shephard’s Ridge Road, meeting with the Places29 Rio CAC, as well as continual e-mail and phone communications

Board of Supervisors’ Feedback

A summary of the feedback from the Board of Supervisors public hearing is as follows:
The scale and intensity of the Project is too big given:

- (1) the traffic concerns along this corridor,

- (2) the designation of this Property as an Entrance Corridor,
- (3) the small size of the Property, and
- (4) residential properties nearby.

Response and Revisions

Given the feedback above, the Project has been revised as follows:

Residential density has been decreased by 40% (from 46 to 28 allowable units).

Allowable commercial square footage has been decreased by 40% (from 10,000 SF to 6,000 SF). In addition, the allowable uses have been restricted to Office uses only (with the exception of a Furniture Store). See the revised traffic estimates below.

The building with non-residential uses has been restricted to one-story (rather than three stories). This will allow the Project to decrease in scale even further for the portion of the Project facing Rio Road East (an Entrance Corridor and the most visible portion of the Project) while still providing a buffer for the small homes in the rear.

A larger portion of the front the Property has been restricted to green space (approximately 6,000 square feet). In addition, the building on the front of the Property facing Rio Road East will be setback approximately 35 to 39 feet. This will allow for robust landscaping to address aesthetic concerns along the Entrance Corridor.

The revised traffic estimates are as follows:

Assuming commercial use is Office only:

			AM			PM		
Use Description	ITE	Qty	in	out	Total	in	out	Total
Single Family Detached	210	24 units	6	16	22	18	10	28
General Office	710	6000 SF	12	2	14	2	7	9
Total			18	18	36	20	17	37

Assuming commercial use is a Furniture Store only:

			AM			PM		
Use Description	ITE	Qty	in	out	Total	in	out	Total
Single Family Detached	210	24 units	6	16	22	18	10	28
Retail - Furniture	869	6000 SF	2	1	3	5	4	9
Total			8	17	25	23	14	37

The result of the above is a 52% to 59% decrease in projected traffic compared to the previous proposal.

While traffic in the Rio Road East Corridor is currently an issue, this issue will persist regardless of this Project. Traffic is most heavily impacted by the Senior Center, SOCA facilities, expansion of the Covenant Church, and the continued build out of Dunlora and Belvedere. Traffic in the Rio Road East Corridor is also heavily impacted by increased redevelopment along the border of Albemarle County and Greene County. The residents in the projects along the Greene County border are commuting to Charlottesville's downtown area via the Rio Road East Corridor but choose to live in Greene County because of the lack of affordable homes in Albemarle and Charlottesville.

The Project is designed for the "missing-middle buyer" i.e. as stated earlier, for those who are moving to Greene County and commuting to Charlottesville's downtown because they cannot afford a home in Albemarle. By rezoning the Property, the County would allow some of these families the benefit of living closer to their employment and the opportunity to save time/money by commuting via the multi-use path and/or public transit. This is important to highlight: while the surrounding *vehicular* infrastructure is due for improvements, the surrounding **pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure** is robust. The multi-use path, which is wide enough to accommodate bicycles, stretches all the way to the downtown area of the City of Charlottesville. In addition, a public transit stop is across the street, with the possibility of being relocated even closer (within the Senior Center).

In sum, the contribution of this Project to traffic in the area is **negligible**, especially compared to the scale of other projects nearby and the allowable density by-right on the Property. Yet, the benefits of the Project are strong – the rezoning would allow missing-middle housing in a corridor with robust pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure, which will have a profound impact on the lives of those families.

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing is an important issue in the region. The intended sales prices of the proposed cottages in the Project are between \$280,000 to \$380,000. As of November 18, 2019, according to Zillow, there are 39 single family detached homes for sale with a Charlottesville address that are at or under \$350,000. Of those, **zero** were constructed within the previous 5 years. In addition, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC) produced a regional housing assessment (the "Housing Assessment") in early 2019.

The Housing Assessment revealed several pertinent statistics and conclusions:

- There is definitively a housing affordability crisis in the area.
 - 8,990 Urban Renters (City of Charlottesville and Development Areas of Albemarle County) pay more than 30% of their incomes for housing costs
 - 2,560 Urban Homeowners pay more than 50% of their incomes for housing costs
- High housing costs in the Urban Areas are causing households to rent or purchase in surrounding localities and commute to work.

- Assuming a cost of approximately 0.58 cents per mile paid 20 days out of the month, commutes can cost between \$348 to \$766 per month depending on the distance (commuting from Lake Monticello versus Lovington)
- Commutes have an environmental impact from the exhaust of increased cars. Commutes also result in less involvement in communities and time away from families.
- There is a need for new, smaller, more affordable housing in the Urban Areas.
 - The cottages are intended to sell for between \$280,000 and \$380,000 – according to the Housing Assessment, an Affordable Unit Purchase Price for households who make 100% of the area *median* income are: \$298,000 for one person, \$344,000 for two people, and \$384,000 for three people. **Therefore, the proposed cottages of the Project will meet the needs of those intended: the “middle market” buyer.**
 - The Housing Assessment states, “Zoning ordinances that specify the number of units per acre, rather than a Floor Area Ratio that relates the amount of space to the amount of land, **incentivize units that are larger and typically more expensive.**” It also states, “Zoning by the number of units per acre is a **disincentive to building smaller, more affordable units.**” By rezoning the Property, the Applicant is able to overcome this disincentive.
 - Households are relatively small – 63.1% of all households in the region had only one or two persons in 2010 and the average household size in 2018 was 2.45 persons.